



# News From MAIENstreet

## A Neighborhood Newsletter From Councilmember Brian Maienschein

March 2007 Volume 7, Issue 2



Proudly Representing the  
District Five  
Communities of:

*Carmel Mountain Ranch  
Mira Mesa  
Rancho Bernardo  
Sabre Springs  
San Pasqual  
Scripps Ranch  
Sorrento Mesa*

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## Maienschein Votes Against Rate Increases for Water & Sewer

I believe that the recent decision made by my colleagues on the City Council to raise water and sewer rates by more than 35% over the next 4 years was unfair to the residents and taxpayers that I was elected to represent. I voted against both the water and sewer rate increases.

Rate increases should be a last resort, rather than a first resort. These increases will have a significant impact on San Diego ratepayers. The money the Water and Sewer Departments are entrusted with in the form of fees and taxes should be spent wisely and efficiently. Increasing those rates should always be a last resort, when all other options have been exhausted, and then only with input and direction from those most affected.

A thorough audit of the Water and Sewer Departments, specifically related to administrative costs, should have been the first step in identifying additional funding for new projects and repairs. By the Water and Sewer Department's own admission, this was never done. It is irresponsible to pass this burden onto taxpayers without the Water and Sewer Departments doing their due diligence to ensure that unnecessary costs are cut within their departments.

In addition, I do not believe that the notice sent to residents regarding the proposed rate increases was sufficiently clear. The purpose of the notice is to provide clear and complete information on the proposed increases so that residents can make an informed decision on whether or not to support or protest the increases. The information presented in this case was far from clear or complete. The notice informed residents that the City would be increasing their water revenue by 6.5% each year for the next four years. In actuality, however, the average ratepayer's monthly bill will increase by approximately 11% per year.

In order for a resident to determine what that increase would mean to them in actual dollars, they would have to know what class of water user they fall into, the size of their water meter, how many hundred cubic feet (HCF) of water they use per month and then navigate through the several charts and graphs included in the notice. Clearly, most people would not be able to understand the notice, and therefore, were unable to register a protest. It should not have required that much knowledge or effort for families to determine what this increase would mean for their budget.

I believe that much more could have been done to ensure that this process was fair and that the burden passed on to taxpayers was minimal. It is for these reasons that I voted against increased water and sewer rates for the families of our City.

## Maienschein Advocates for Efficient Brush Management

On February 15, 2007, I testified before the Coastal Commission in opposition to the Coastal Commission's proposed changes to the Brush Management Policy. The Coastal Commission staff had originally proposed a number of changes to the program including the prohibition of the use of goats in coastal zones, as well as the need for residents to obtain permits to do brush management in coastal zones. The proposed modifications were a detriment to the public safety of our City residents and would have resulted in potentially serious consequences.

I was specifically concerned about the Coastal Commission's proposal to eliminate or restrict the use of goats to clear brush in the coastal zones. As you know, Scripps Ranch residents led a successful project where goats were used for brush management. I explained to the Commission that entire neighborhoods are now safer because of the goats. I added that residents saved money by using goats instead of traditional brush management crews.

I also believe the Coastal Commission's proposal to require a permit to do brush management would be too expensive and time-consuming for residents to pursue. In my opinion, it is ridiculous to require residents to spend their time and money getting permits to do a public service! Ultimately, the expense and time spent processing the permit would likely have resulted in residents abandoning plans for brush management. I am pleased to report the Coastal Commission agreed with my position, and this aspect of the proposal was revised. I will continue to push for effective protective measures for our community.

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## Maienschein Cracks Down on Sale of Toy Guns

In an effort to prevent realistic toy guns from ending up in the hands of young children, I recently partnered with the San Diego Police Department and the San Diego Unified School District to strengthen and enforce an ordinance banning the sale of imitation fire arms by ice cream trucks and other food vendors.

I initiated this action in response to several reports of ice cream trucks selling realistic toy guns to children of all ages, often without any parental knowledge or consent. These fake guns bear a striking resemblance to a real weapon and police officers have found it difficult to distinguish them, especially from a distance. In addition, several students have brought the toy guns to school after having purchased them from an ice cream vendor nearby. I was concerned that kids could be injured or killed inadvertently by law enforcement or use these realistic looking toy guns to threaten or rob members of the community.

The San Diego Police Department's Vice Squad and the San Diego Unified School District Police will be conducting random inspections of ice cream and food vendors to ensure that they are in compliance with the ordinance. I found it particularly offensive that something as innocent and "All-American" as an ice cream truck would sell such dangerous items to children.

I feel that the changes made to this law are critical to protecting our children. When parents give their kids money to buy an ice cream, they need to be assured that they won't come home with an imitation gun instead. I believe that the actions we are taking will help to fix this problem and ensure the safety of our neighborhoods.

## City Receives Funding for Regional Transportation Projects

I am thrilled to announce that after lobbying the California Transportation Commission (CTC), the San Diego region received over \$450 million of Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) funds under Proposition 1B for our regional transportation projects.

Of the \$451.5 million coming to our region, \$350 million will go towards the improvements on the I-15 corridor, focusing primarily on HOV lane expansion from State Route 56 southward to the State Route 163 & I-15 split. This is the second part of the bigger I-15 Corridor Improvements Project. Part one, which includes HOV lanes and auxiliary lanes from SR56 to the Lake Hodges Bridge, will be completed in early 2008.

Of the remaining \$100 million, approximately \$82 million will be dedicated to the I-805 corridor and other local roadway improvements, including the extension of Carroll Canyon Road. This project will extend Carroll Canyon Rd. from Scranton, under the I-805 freeway, to Sorrento Valley Blvd. and the I-805 freeway. While this is a short stretch of roadway, it is crucial to relieving traffic congestion on Mira Mesa Blvd. and the Sorrento Mesa employment center.

I worked with Mayor Sanders and his staff to dedicate \$11.7 million of local city funding to leverage the State's support of this project and it worked perfectly! I believe that these infrastructure improvements are crucial to our region and I am looking forward to the many upcoming groundbreaking events in our Council District.

## Maienschein Celebrates Groundbreaking of Field House

On March 12, 2007, I was proud to join with San Diego Miramar College President Patricia Hsieh, and Mayor Jerry Sanders to celebrate the groundbreaking of a 64,00 square-foot-field house, a joint development between Miramar College and City of San Diego.

The \$18.6 million project will function as both a sports complex, complete with gymnasium and locker rooms, and a community center. This is the third and final phase of the 32-acre Hourglass Park Complex on the Miramar College campus. The field house is a fantastic addition to the Mira Mesa community and I am confident that it will benefit both Miramar College and the surrounding residents. A Summer 2008 completion is expected.





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It's a pleasure to serve you on the San Diego City Council!